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**THE POEMS OF
OSCAR WILDE**

VOLUME II

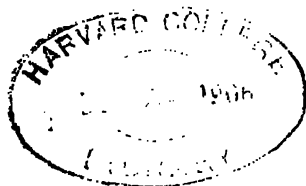
THE POEMS OF
OSCAR WILDE

VOLUME II

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FLOWERS OF GOLD

IMPRESSIONS

I

LES SILHOUETTES

THE sea is flecked with bars of gray,
The dull dead wind is out of tune,
And like a withered leaf the moon
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand
The black boat lies : a sailor boy
Clambers aboard in careless joy
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,
Where through the dusky upland grass
The young brown-throated reapers pass,
Like silhouettes against the sky.

II

LA FUITE DE LA LUNE

TO outer senses there is peace,
A dreamy peace on either hand,
Deep silence in the shadowy land,
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill
From some lone bird disconsolate ;
A corncrake calling to its mate ;
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws
Her sickle from the lightening skies,
And to her sombre cavern flies,
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

RID of the world's injustice, and his pain, 0
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue: 1
Taken from life when life and love were new 2
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain, 1
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain. 1
No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew, 2
But gentle violets weeping with the dew 2
Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain. 3
O proudest heart that broke for misery! 4
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene! 4
O poet-painter of our English Land! 5
Thy name was writ in water — it shall stand: 5
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green, 6
As Isabella did her Basil-tree. 4

ROME.

THEOCRITUS

A VILLANELLE

O SINGER of Persephone !
In the dim meadows desolate
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

Still through the ivy flits the bee
Where Amaryllis lies in state ;
O Singer of Persephone !

Simætha calls on Hecate
And hears the wild dogs at the gate ;
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

Still by the light and laughing sea
Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate :
O Singer of Persephone !

And still in boyish rivalry
Young Daphnis challenges his mate :
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

**Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,
For thee the jocund shepherds wait,
O Singer of Persephone !
Dost thou remember Sicily ?**

IN THE GOLD ROOM

A HARMONY

HER ivory hands on the ivory keys
Strayed in a fitful fantasy,
Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees
Rustled their pale leaves listlessly,
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea
When the waves show their teeth in the flying breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold
Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun
On the burnished disk of the marigold,
Or the sunflower turning to meet the sun
When the gloom of the dark blue night is done,
And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine
Burned like the ruby fire set
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,
Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,
Or the heart of the lotus drenched and wet
With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

BALLADE DE MARGUERITE

(NORMANDE)

I AM weary of lying within the chase
When the knights are meeting in market-place.

Nay, go not thou to the red-roofed town
Lest the hooves of the war-horse tread thee down.

But I would not go where the Squires ride,
I would only walk by my Lady's side.

Alack ! and alack ! thou art over bold,
A Forester's son may not eat off gold.

Will she love me the less that my Father is seen,
Each Martinmas day in a doublet green ?

Perchance she is sewing at tapestry,
Spindle and loom are not meet for thee.

Ah, if she is working the arras bright
I might ravel the threads by the fire-light.

Perchance she is hunting of the deer,
How could you follow o'er hill and meer ?

Ah, if she is riding with the court,
I might run beside her and wind the morte.

Perchance she is kneeling in S. Denys,
(On her soul may our Lady have gramercy !)

Ah, if she is praying in lone chapelle,
I might swing the censer and ring the bell.

Come in my son, for you look sae pale,
The father shall fill thee a stoup of ale.

But who are these knights in bright array ?
Is it a pageant the rich folks play ?

'Tis the King of England from over sea,
Who has come unto visit our fair countrie.

But why does the curfew toll sae low
And why do the mourners walk a-row ?

O 'tis Hugh of Amiens my sister's son
Who is lying stark, for his day is done.

Nay, nay, for I see white lilies clear,
It is no strong man who lies on the bier.

O 'tis old Dame Jeannette that kept the hall,
I knew she would die at the autumn fall.

Dame Jeannette had not that gold-brown hair,
Old Jeannette was not a maiden fair.

O 'tis none of our kith and none of our kin,
(Her soul may our Lady assoil from sin !)

But I hear the boy's voice chaunting sweet,
" Elle est morte, la Marguerite."

Come in my son and lie on the bed,
And let the dead folk bury their dead.

O mother, you know I loved her true :
O mother, hath one grave room for two ?

THE DOLE OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER

(BRETON)

SEVEN stars in the still water,
And seven in the sky ;
Seven sins on the King's daughter,
Deep in her soul to lie.

Red roses are at her feet,
(Roses are red in her red-gold hair)
And O where her bosom and girdle meet
Red roses are hidden there.

Fair is the knight who lieth slain
Amid the rush and reed,
See the lean fishes that are fain
Upon dead men to feed.

Sweet is the page that lieth there,
(Cloth of gold is goodly prey,)
See the black ravens in the air,
Black, O black as the night are they.

What do they there so stark and dead ?

(There is blood upon her hand)

Why are the lilies flecked with red ?

(There is no blood on the river sand.)

There are two that ride from the south and east,

And two from the north and west,

For the black raven a goodly feast,

For the King's daughter rest.

There is one man who loves her true,

(Red, O red, is the stain of gore !)

He hath duggen a grave by the darksome yew,

(One grave will do for four.)

No moon in the still heaven,

In the black water none,

The sins on her soul are seven,

The sin upon his is one.

AMOR INTELLECTUALIS

OFT have we trod the vales of Castaly
And heard sweet notes of sylvan music blown
From antique reeds to common folk unknown :
And often launched our bark upon that sea
Which the nine muses hold in empery,
And ploughed free furrows through the wave and
foam,
Nor spread reluctant sail for more safe home
Till we had freighted well our argosy.
Of which despoiled treasures these remain,
Sordello's passion, and the honied line
Of young Endymion, lordly Tamburlaine
Driving his pampered jades, and, more than these,
The seven-fold vision of the Florentine,
And grave-browed Milton's solemn harmonies.

SANTA DECCA

THE Gods are dead : no longer do we bring
To gray-eyed Pallas crowns of olive-leaves !
Demeter's child no more hath tithe of sheaves,
And in the noon the careless shepherds sing,
For Pan is dead, and all the wantoning
By secret glade and devious haunt is o'er :
Young Hylas seeks the water-springs no more ;
Great Pan is dead, and Mary's Son is King.

And yet—perchance in this sea-trancèd isle,
Chewing the bitter fruit of memory,
Some God lies hidden in the asphodel.
Ah Love ! if such there be then it were well
For us to fly his anger : nay, but see
The leaves are stirring : let us watch a-while.

CORFU.

A VISION

TWO crowned Kings, and One that stood alone
With no green weight of laurels round his
head,
But with sad eyes as one uncomforted,
And wearied with man's never-ceasing moan
For sins no bleating victim can atone,
And sweet long lips with tears and kisses fed.
Girt was he in a garment black and red,
And at his feet I marked a broken stone
Which sent up lilies, dove-like, to his knees.
Now at their sight, my heart being lit with flame
I cried to Beatrice, "Who are these?"
And she made answer, knowing well each name,
"Æschylos first, the second Sophokles,
And last (wide stream of tears!) Euripides."

IMPRESSION DU VOYAGE

THE sea was sapphire colored, and the sky
Burned like a heated opal through the air ;
We hoisted sail ; the wind was blowing fair
For the blue lands that to the eastward lie.
From the steep prow I marked with quickening eye
Zakynthos, every olive grove and creek,
Ithaca's cliff, Lycaon's snowy peak,
And all the flower-strewn hills of Arcady.
The flapping of the sail against the mast,
The ripple of the water on the side,
The ripple of girls' laughter at the stern,
The only sounds :—when 'gan the West to burn,
And a red sun upon the seas to ride,
I stood upon the soil of Greece at last !

KATAKOLO.

THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY

LIKE burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed
Gaunt cypress-trees stand round the sun-
bleached stone ;

Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,
And the slight lizard show his jeweled head.
And, where the chaliced poppies flame to red,
In the still chamber of yon pyramid
Surely some Old-World Sphinx lurks darkly hid,
Grim warder of this pleasaunce of the dead.

Ah ! sweet indeed to rest within the womb
Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,
But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb
In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,
Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom
Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.

ROME.

BY THE ARNO

THE oleander on the wall
Grows crimson in the dawning night,
Though the gray shadows of the light
Lie yet on Florence like a pall.

The dew is bright upon the hill,
And bright the blossoms overhead,
But ah ! the grasshoppers have fled,
The little Attic song is still.

Only the leaves are gently stirred
By the soft breathing of the gale,
And in the almond-scented vale
The lonely nightingale is heard.

The day will make thee silent soon,
O nightingale sing on for love !
While yet upon the shadowy grove
Splinter the arrows of the moon.

Before across the silent lawn
In sea-green mist the morning steals,
And to love's frightened eyes reveals
The long white fingers of the dawn

Fast climbing up the eastern sky
To grasp and slay the shuddering night,
All careless of my heart's delight,
Or if the nightingale should die.

IMPRESSIONS DU THÉÂTRE

FABIEN DEI FRANCHI

To My Friend HENRY IRVING.

THE silent room, the heavy creeping shade,
The dead that travel fast, the opening door,
The murdered brother rising through the floor,
The ghost's white fingers on thy shoulders laid,
And then the lonely duel in the glade,
The broken swords, the stifled scream, the gore,
Thy grand revengeful eyes when all is o'er,—
These things are well enough,—but thou wert made
For more august creation ! frenzied Lear
Should at thy bidding wander on the heath
With the shrill fool to mock him, Romeo
For thee should lure his love, and desperate fear
Pluck Richard's recreant dagger from its sheath —
Thou trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow !

PHÈDRE

HOW vain and dull this common world must seem
To such a One as thou, who should'st have
talked

At Florence with Mirandola, or walked
Through the cool olives of the Academe :
Thou should'st have gathered reeds from a green
stream

For Goat-foot Pan's shrill piping, and have played
With the white girls in that Phæacian glade
Where grave Odysseus wakened from his dream.

Ah ! surely once some urn of Attic clay
Held thy wan dust, and thou hast come again
Back to this common world so dull and vain,
For thou wert weary of the sunless day,
The heavy fields of scentless asphodel,
The loveless lips with which men kiss in Hell.

PORTIA

I MARVEL not Bassanio was so bold
To peril all he had upon the lead,
Or that proud Aragon bent low his head,
Or that Morocco's fiery heart grew cold :
For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold
Which is more golden than the golden sun,
No woman Veronesé looked upon
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold.
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield
The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned
And would not let the laws of Venice yield
Antonio's heart to that accursèd Jew —
O Portia ! take my heart : it is thy due :
I think I will not quarrel with the Bond.

QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA

IN the lone tent, waiting for victory,
She stands with eyes marred by the mists of pain,
Like some wan lily overdrenched with rain :
The clamorous clang of arms, the ensanguined sky,
War's ruin, and the wreck of chivalry,
To her proud soul no common fear can bring :
Bravely she tarrieth for her Lord the King,
Her soul a-flame with passionate ecstasy.
O Hair of Gold ! O Crimson Lips ! O Face
Made for the luring and the love of man !
With thee I do forget the toil and stress,
The loveless road that knows no resting-place,
Time's straitened pulse, the soul's dread weariness,
My freedom, and my life republican !

CAMMA

AS one who poring on a Grecian urn
Scans the fair shapes some Attic hand hath
made,

God with slim goddess, goodly man with maid,
And for their beauty's sake is loth to turn
And face the obvious day, must I not yearn
For many a secret moon of indolent bliss,
When in the midmost shrine of Artemis
I see thee standing, antique-limbed, and stern ?

And yet—methinks I'd rather see thee play
That serpent of old Nile, whose witchery
Made Emperors drunken,—come, great Egypt, shake
Our stage with all thy mimic pageants ! Nay,
I am grown sick of unreal passions, make
The world thine Actium, me thine Antony !

PANTHEA

PANTHEA

NAY, let us walk from fire unto fire,
From passionate pain to deadlier delight,—
I am too young to live without desire,
Too young art thou to waste this summer night
Asking those idle questions which of old
Man sought of seer and oracle, and no reply was told.

For, sweet, to feel is better than to know,
And wisdom is a childless heritage,
One pulse of passion—youth's first fiery glow,—
Are worth the hoarded proverbs of the sage :
Vex not thy soul with dead philosophy,
Have we not lips to kiss with, hearts to love, and eyes
to see !

Dost thou not hear the murmuring nightingale
Like water bubbling from a silver jar,
So soft she sings the envious moon is pale,
That high in heaven she is hung so far

She cannot hear that love-enraptured tune,—
Mark how she wreathes each horn with mist, yon late
and laboring moon.

White lilies, in whose cups the gold bees dream,
The fallen snow of petals where the breeze
Scatters the chestnut blossom, or the gleam
Of boyish limbs in water,—are not these
Enough for thee, dost thou desire more?
Alas! the Gods will give nought else from their eternal
store.

For our high Gods have sick and wearied grown
Of all our endless sins, our vain endeavor
For wasted days of youth to make atone
By pain or prayer or priest, and never, never,
Hearken they now to either good or ill,
But send their rain upon the just and the unjust at
will.

They sit at ease, our Gods they sit at ease,
Strewing with leaves of rose their scented wine,
They sleep, they sleep, beneath the rocking trees
Where asphodel and yellow lotus twine,
Mourning the old glad days before they knew
What evil things the heart of man could dream, and
dreaming do.

And far beneath the heaven fair they see
Like swarming flies the crowd of little men.

The bustle of small lives, their working
Back to their lowly haunts they turn again

Kissing each other's mouths, and mix more deep
The poppy-seeded draught which brings not deeper

huddled sleep.

There all day long the golden-vestured sun
Their torch-bearer, stands with his torch a-flare.

And, when the gaudy web of noon is spun
By its twelve maidens, through the crimson haze

Fresh from Encyrrion's arms comes forth the moon.
And the immortal Gods in robes of mortal passion
swoon.

There walks Queen Juno through some dewy mead
Her grand white feet flecked with the saffron dust

Of wind-stirred lilies, while young Ganymede
Leaps in the hot and amber-foaming mist.

His curls all tossed, as when the eagle bore
The frightened boy from Ida through the blue heaven air.

There in the green heart of some garden close
Queen Venus with the sleepers at her side

Her warm soft body like the ivory rose
Which would be white yet blushes at its pride.

Laughs low for love, till jealous Salmacis
Peers through the myrtle-leaves and sighs for pain of
lonely bliss.

There never does that dreary north-wind blow
Which leaves our English forests bleak and bare,
Nor ever falls the swift white-feathered snow,
Nor ever doth the red-toothed lightning dare
To wake them in the silver-fretted night
When we lie weeping for some sweet sad sin, some
dead delight.

Alas ! they know the far Lethæan spring,
The violet-hidden waters well they know,
Where one whose feet with tired wandering
Are faint and broken may take heart and go,
And from those dark depths cool and crystalline
Drink, and draw balm, and sleep for sleepless souls,
and anodyne.

But we oppress our natures, God or Fate
Is our enemy, we starve and feed
On vain repentance—O we are born too late !
What balm for us in bruised poppy seed
Who crowd into one finite pulse of time
The joy of infinite love and the fierce pain of infinite
crime.

O we are wearied of this sense of guilt,
Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,
Wearied of every temple we have built,
Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,
For man is weak ; God sleeps : and heaven is high :
One fiery-colored moment : one great love ; and lo !
we die.

Ah ! but no ferry-man with laboring pole
Nears his black shallop to the flowerless strand,
No little coin of bronze can bring the soul
Over Death's river to the sunless land,
Victim and wine and vow are all in vain,
The tomb is sealed ; the soldiers watch ; the dead
rise not again.

We are resolved into the supreme air,
We are made one with what we touch and see,
With our heart's blood each crimson sun is fair,
With our young lives each spring-impassioned tree
Flames into green, the wildest beasts that range
The moor our kinsman are, all life is one, and all is
change.

With beat of systole and of diastole
One grand great life throbs through earth's giant heart,

And mighty waves of single Being roll

From nerve-less germ to man, for we are part
Of every rock and bird and beast and hill,
One with the things that prey on us, and one with
what we kill.

From lower cells of waking life we pass

To full perfection ; thus the world grows old :
We who are godlike now were once a mass
Of quivering purple flecked with bars of gold,
Unsentient or of joy or misery,
And tossed in terrible tangles of some wild and wind-
swept sea.

This hot hard flame with which our bodies burn

Will make some meadow blaze with daffodil,
Ay ! and those argent breasts of thine will turn
To water-lilies ; the brown fields men till
Will be more fruitful for our love to-night,
Nothing is lost in nature, all things live in Death's de-
spite.

The boy's first kiss, the hyacinth's first bell,

The man's last passion, and the last red spear
That from the lily leaps, the asphodel
Which will not let its blossoms blow for fear

Of too much beauty, and the timid shame
Of the young bride-groom at his lover's eyes,—these
with the same

One sacrament are consecrate, the earth
Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,
The yellow buttercups that shake for mirth
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real
Than we do, when in some fresh-blossoming wood
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that life
is good.

So when men bury us beneath the yew
Thy crimson-stained mouth a rose will be,
And thy soft eyes lush bluebells dimmed with dew,
And when the white narcissus wantonly
Kisses the wind its playmate some faint joy
Will thrill our dust, and we will be again fond maid
and boy.

And thus without life's conscious torturing pain
In some sweet flower we will feel the sun,
And from the linnet's throat will sing again,
And as two gorgeous-mailed snakes will run

Over our graves, or as two tigers creep
Through the hot jungle where the yellow-eyed huge
lions sleep

And give them battle ! How my heart leaps up
To think of that grand living after death
In beast and bird and flower, when this cup,
Being filled too full of spirit, bursts for breath,
And with the pale leaves of some autumn day
The soul earth's earliest conqueror becomes earth's
last great prey.

O think of it ! We shall inform ourselves
Into all sensuous life, the goat-foot Faun,
The Centaur, or the merry bright-eyed Elves
That leave their dancing rings to spite the dawn
Upon the meadows, shall not be more near
Than you and I to nature's mysteries, for we shall
hear

The thrush's heart beat, and the daisies grow,
And the wan snowdrop sighing for the sun
On sunless days in winter, we shall know
By whom the silver gossamer is spun,

Who paints the diapered fritillaries,
On what wide wings from shivering pine to pine the
eagle flies.

Ay ! had we never loved at all, who knows
If yonder daffodil had lured the bee
Into its gilded womb, or any rose
Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree !
Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring,
But for the lovers' lips that kiss, the poets' lips that
sing.

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,
Or is this dædal-fashioned earth less fair,
That we are nature's heritors, and one
With every pulse of life that beats the air ?
Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,
New splendor come unto the flower, new glory to the
grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,
Critics of nature, but the joyous sea
Shall be our raiment, and the bearded star
Shoot arrows at our pleasure ! We shall be

Part of the mighty universal whole,
And through all æons mix and mingle with the Kosmic
Soul !

We shall be notes in that great Symphony
Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic spheres,
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be
One with our heart, the stealthy creeping years
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality !

THE FOURTH MOVEMENT

IMPRESSION

LE REVEILLON

THE sky is laced with fitful red,
The circling mists and shadows flee,
The dawn is rising from the sea,
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall
Athwart the feathers of the night,
And a long wave of yellow light
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,
And all the branches streaked with gold.

AT VERONA

HOW steep the stairs within Kings' houses are
For exile-wearied feet as mine to tread,
And O how salt and bitter is the bread
Which falls from this Hound's table,—better far
That I had died in the red ways of war,
Or that at the gate of Florence bare my head,
Than to live thus, by all things comraded
Which seek the essence of my soul to mar.

“Curse God and die: what better hope than this?
He hath forgotten thee in all the bliss
Of his gold city, and eternal day”—
Nay peace: behind my prison's blinded bars
I do possess what none can take away,
My love, and all the glory of the stars.

APOLOGIA

IS it thy will that I should wax and wane,
Barter my cloth of gold for hodden gray,
And at thy pleasure weave that web of pain
Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day?

Is it thy will—Love that I love so well—
That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell
The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not?

Nay, if it be thy will I shall endure,
And sell ambition at the common mart,
And let dull failure be my vestiture,
And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so—at least
I have not made my heart a heart of stone,
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so ; sought to fence
In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,
While all the forest sang of liberty,

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight
Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,
To where some steep untrodden mountain height
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair.

Or how the little flower he trod upon,
The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been
The best beloved for a little while,
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Ay ! though the gorgèd asp of passion feed
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars !

QUIA MULTUM AMAVI

DEAR Heart I think the young impassioned priest
When first he takes from out the hidden shrine
His God imprisoned in the Eucharist,
And eats the bread, and drinks the dreadful wine.

Feels not such awful wonder as I felt
When first my smitten eyes beat full on thee,
And all night long before thy feet I knelt
Till thou wert wearied of Idolatry.

Ah ! had'st thou liked me less and loved me more,
Through all those summer days of joy and rain,
I had not now been sorrow's heritor,
Or stood a lackey in the House of Pain.

Yet, though remorse, youth's white-faced seneschal
Tread on my heels with all his retinue,
I am most glad I loved thee—think of all
The suns that go to make one speedwell blue !

SILENTIUM AMORIS

AS oftentimes the too resplendent sun
Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon
Back to her sombre cave, ere she hath won
A single ballad from the nightingale,
So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,
And all my sweetest singing out of tune.

And as at dawn across the level mead
On wings impetuous some wind will come,
And with its too harsh kisses break the reed
Which was its only instrument of song,
So my too stormy passions work me wrong,
And for excess of Love my Love is dumb :

But surely unto thee mine eyes did show
Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung ;
Else it were better we should part, and go,
Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,
And I to nurse the barren memory
Of unkind kisses, and songs never sung.

HER VOICE

THE wild bee reels from bough to bough
With his furry coat and his gauzy wing,
Now in a lily-cup, and now
Setting a jacinth bell a-swing,
In his wandering ;
Sit closer love : it was here I trow
I made that vow,

Swore that two lives should be like one
As long as the sea-gull loved the sea,
As long as the sunflower sought the sun,—
It shall be, I said, for eternity
'Twixt you and me !
Dear friend, those times are over and done,
Love's web is spun.

Look upward where the poplar trees
Sway and sway in the summer air,
Here in the valley never a breeze
Scatters the thistledown, but there
Great winds blow fair

From the mighty murmuring mystical seas,
And the wave-lashed leas.

Look upward when the white gull screams,
What does it see that we do not see?
Is that a star? or the lamp that gleams
On some outward voyaging argosy,—
Ah! can it be
We have lived our lives in a land of dreams!
How sad it seems.

Sweet, there is nothing left to say
But this, that love is never lost,
Keen winter stabs the breasts of May
Whose crimson roses burst his frost,
Ships tempest-tossed
Will find a harbor in some bay,
And so we may.

And there is nothing left to do
But to kiss once again, and part,
Nay, there is nothing we should rue,
I have my beauty,—you your Art,
Nay, do not start,
One world was not enough for two
Like me and you.

MY VOICE

WITHIN this restless, hurried, modern world
We took our hearts' full pleasure—You
and I,
And now the white sails of our ship are furled,
And spent the lading of our argosy.

Wherefore my cheeks before their time are wan,
For very weeping is my gladness fled,
Sorrow has paled my young mouth's vermillion,
And Ruin draws the curtains of my bed.

But all this crowded life has been to thee
No more than lyre, or lute, or subtle spell
Of viols, or the music of the sea
That sleeps, a mimic echo, in the shell.

TÆDIUM VITÆ

TO stab my youth with desperate knives, to wear
This paltry age's gaudy livery,
To let each base hand filch my treasury,
To mesh my soul within a woman's hair,
And be mere Fortune's lackeyed groom,—I swear
I love it not ! these things are less to me
Than the thin foam that frets upon the sea,
Less than the thistle-down of summer air
Which hath no seed : better to stand aloof
Far from these slanderous fools who mock my life
Knowing me not, better the lowliest roof
Fit for the meanest hind to sojourn in,
Than to go back to that hoarse cave of strife
Where my white soul first kissed the mouth of sin.

HUMANITAD

1

HUMANITAD

IT is full Winter now : the trees are bare,
Save where the cattle huddle from the cold
Beneath the pine, for it doth never wear
The Autumn's gaudy livery whose gold
Her jealous brother pilfers, but is true
To the green doublet ; bitter is the wind, as though it
blew

From Saturn's cave ; a few thin wisps of hay
Lie on the sharp black hedges, where the wain
Dragged the sweet pillage of a summer's day
From the low meadows up the narrow lane ;
Upon the half-thawed snow the bleating sheep
Press close against the hurdles, and the shivering
house-dogs creep

From the shut stable to the frozen stream
And back again disconsolate, and miss
The bawling shepherds and the noisy team ;
And overhead in circling listlessness

The cawing rooks whirl round the frosted stack,
Or crowd the dripping boughs ; and in the fen the
ice-pools crack

Where the gaunt bittern stalks among the reeds
And flaps his wings, and stretches back his neck,
And hoots to see the moon ; across the meads
Limps the poor frightened hare, a little speck ;
And a stray seamew with its fretful cry
Flits like a sudden drift of snow against the dull gray
sky.

Full winter : and the lusty goodman brings
His load of faggots from the chilly byre,
And stamps his feet upon the hearth, and flings
The sappy billets on the waning fire,
And laughs to see the sudden lightening scare
His children at their play ; and yet,—the Spring is in
the air,

Already the slim crocus stirs the snow,
And soon yon blanchèd fields will bloom again
With nodding cowslips for some lad to mow,
For with the first warm kisses of the rain

The winter's icy sorrow breaks to tears,
And the brown thrushes mate, and with bright eyes
the rabbit peers

From the dark warren where the fir-cones lie,
And treads one snowdrop under foot, and runs
Over the mossy knoll, and blackbirds fly
Across our path at evening, and the suns
Stay longer with us ; ah ! how good to see
Grass-girdled Spring in all her joy of laughing
greenery

Dance through the hedges till the early rose,
(That sweet repentance of the thorny briar !)
Burst from its sheathed emerald and disclose
The little quivering disk of golden fire
Which the bees know so well, for with it come
Pale boys-love, sops-in-wine, and daffadillies all in
bloom.

Then up and down the field the sower goes,
While close behind the laughing younker scares
With shrilly whoop the black and thievish crows,
And then the chestnut-tree its glory wears,
And on the grass the creamy blossom falls
In odorous excess, and faint half-whispered madrigals

Steal from the bluebells' nodding carillons
Each breezy morn, and then white jessamine,
That star of its own heaven, snapdragons
With lolling crimson tongues, and eglantine
In dusty velvets clad usurp the bed
And woodland empery, and when the lingering rose
hath shed

Red leaf by leaf its folded panoply,
And pansies closed their purple-lidded eyes,
Chrysanthemums from gilded argosy
Unload their gaudy scentless merchandise,
And violets getting overbold withdraw
From their shy nooks, and scarlet berries dot the leaf-
less haw.

O happy field ! and O thrice happy tree !
Soon will your queen in daisy-flowered smock
And crown of flower-de-luce trip down the lea,
Soon will the lazy shepherds drive their flock
Back to the pasture by the pool, and soon
Through the green leaves will float the hum of mur-
muring bees at noon.

Soon will the glade be bright with bellamour,
The flower which wantons love, and those sweet nuns

Vale-lilies in their snowy vestiture

Will tell their beaded pearls, and carnations
With mitred dusky leaves will scent the wind,
And straggling traveler's joy each hedge with yellow
stars will bind.

Dear Bride of Nature and most bounteous Spring !

That can'st give increase to the sweet-breath'd kine,
And to the kid its little horns, and bring
The soft and silky blossoms to the vine,
Where is that old nepenthe which of yore
Man got from poppy root and glossy-berried man-
dragore !

There was a time when any common bird

Could make me sing in unison, a time
When all the strings of boyish life was stirred
To quick response or more melodious rhyme
By every forest idyll ;—do I change ?
Or rather doth some evil thing through thy fair pleas-
aunce range ?

Nay, nay, thou art the same : 'tis I who seek

To vex with sighs thy simple solitude,
And because fruitless tears bedew my cheek
Would have thee weep with me in brotherhood ;

Fool ! shall each wronged and restless spirit dare
To taint such wine with the salt poison of his own
despair !

Thou art the same : 'tis I whose wretched soul
Takes discontent to be its paramour,
And gives its kingdom to the rude control
Of what should be its servitor,—for sure
Wisdom is somewhere, though the stormy sea
Contain it not, and the huge deep answer “'Tis not
in me.”

To burn with one clear flame, to stand erect
In natural honor, not to bend the knee
In profitless prostrations whose effect
Is by itself condemned, what alchemy
Can teach me this ? what herb Medea brewed
Will bring the unexultant peace of essence not sub-
dued ?

The minor chord which ends the harmony,
And for its answering brother waits in vain,
Sobbing for incompleated melody
Dies a Swan's death ; but I the heir of pain

A silent Memnon with blank lidless eyes
Wait for the light and music of those suns which never
rise.

The quenched-out torch, the lonely cypress-gloom,
The little dust stored in the narrow urn,
The gentle XAIPE of the Attic tomb,—
Were not these better far than to return
To my old fitful restless malady,
Or spend my days within the voiceless cave of misery ?

Nay ! for perchance that poppy-crownèd God
Is like the watcher by a sick man's bed
Who talks of sleep but gives it not ; his rod
Hath lost its virtue, and, when all is said,
Death is too rude, too obvious a key
To solve one single secret in a life's philosophy.

And Love ! that noble madness, whose august
And inextinguishable might can slay
The soul with honied drugs,—alas ! I must
From such sweet ruin play the runaway,
Although too constant memory never can
Forget the archèd splendor of those brows Olympian

Which for a little season made my youth
So soft a swoon of exquisite indolence
That all the chiding of more prudent Truth
Seemed the thin voice of jealousy,—O Hence
Thou huntress deadlier than Artemis!
Go seek some other quarry! for of thy too perilous
bliss

My lips have drunk enough,—no more, no more,—
Though Love himself should turn his glided prow
Back to the troubled waters of this shore
Where I am wrecked and stranded, even now
The chariot wheels of passion sweep too near,
Hence! Hence! I pass unto a life more barren,
more austere.

More barren—ay, those arms will never lean
Down through the trellised vines and draw my soul
In sweet reluctance through the tangled green;
Some other head must wear that aureole,
For I am Hers who loves not any man
Whose white and stainless bosom bears the sign
Gorgonian.

Let Venus go and chuck her dainty page,
And kiss his mouth, and toss his curly hair,

With net and spear and hunting equipage
Let young Adonis to his tryst repair,
But me her fond and subtle-fashioned spell
Delights no more, though I could win her dearest
citadel.

Ay, though I were that laughing shepherd boy
Who from Mount Ida saw the little cloud
Pass over Tenedos and lofty Troy
And knew the coming of the Queen, and bowed
In wonder at her feet, not for the sake
Of a new Helen would I bid her hand the apple take.

Then rise supreme Athena argent-limbed !
And, if my lips be musicless, inspire
At least my life : was not thy glory hymned
By One who gave to thee his sword and lyre
Like Æschylus at well-fought Marathon,
And died to show that Milton's England still could
bear a son !

And yet I cannot tread the Portico
And live without desire, fear, and pain,
Or nurture that wise calm which long ago
The grave Athenian master taught to men,

Self-poised, self-centred, and self-comforted,
To watch the world's vain phantasies go by with un-
bowed head.

Alas ! that serene brow, those eloquent lips,
Those eyes that mirrored all eternity,
Rest in their own Colonos, an eclipse
Hath come on Wisdom, and Mnemosyne
Is childless ; in the night which she had made
For lofty secure flight Athena's owl itself hath strayed.

Nor much with Science do I care to climb,
Although by strange and subtle witchery
She draw the moon from heaven : the Muse of Time
Unrolls her gorgeous-colored tapestry
To no less eager eyes ; often indeed
In the great epic of Polymnia's scroll I love to read

How Asia sent her myriad hosts to war
Against a little town, and panoplied
In gilded mail with jeweled scimeter,
White-shielded, purple-crested, rode the Mede
Between the waving poplars and the sea
Which men call Artemisium, till he saw Thermopylæ

Its steep ravine spanned by a narrow wall,
And on the nearer side a little brood
Of careless lions holding festival !
And stood amazed at such hardihood,
And pitched his tent upon the reedy shore,
And stayed two days to wonder, and then crept at
midnight o'er

Some unfrequented height, and coming down
The autumn forests treacherously slew
What Sparta held most dear and was the crown
Of far Eurotas, and passed on, nor knew
How God had staked an evil net for him
In the small bay of Salamis,—and yet, the page grows
dim,

Its cadenced Greek delights me not, I feel
With such a goodly time too out of tune
To love it much : for like the Dial's wheel
That from its blinded darkness strikes the noon
Yet never sees the sun, so do my eyes
Restlessly follow that which from my cheated vision
flies.

For one grand unselfish simple life
To teach us what is Wisdom ! speak ye hills

Of lone Helvellyn, for this note of strife
Shunned your untroubled crags and crystal rills,
Where is that Spirit which living blamelessly
Yet dared to kiss the smitten mouth of his own
century !

Speak ye Rydalian laurels ! where is He
Whose gentle head ye sheltered, that pure soul
Whose gracious days of uncrowned majesty
Through lowliest conduct touched the lofty goal
Where Love and Duty mingle ! Him at least
The most high Laws were glad of, he had sat at
Wisdom's feast,

But we are Learning's changelings, know by rote
The clarion watchword of each Grecian school
And follow none, the flawless sword which smote
The pagan Hydra is an effete tool
Which we ourselves have blunted, what man now
Shall scale the august ancient heights and to old Rev-
erence bow ?

One such indeed I saw, but, Ichabod !
Gone is that last dear son of Italy,
Who being man died for the sake of God,

And whose unrisen bones sleep peacefully,
O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,
Thou marble lily of the lily town ! let not the lower

Of the rude tempest vex his slumber, or
The Arno with its tawny troubled gold
O'erleap its marge, no mightier conqueror
Clomb the high Capitol in the days of old
When Rome was indeed Rome, for Liberty
Walked like a Bride beside him, at which sight pale
Mystery

Fled shrieking to her farthest sombreast cell
With an old man who grabbed rusty keys,
Fled shuddering for that immemorial knell
With which oblivion buries dynasties
Swept like a wounded eagle on the blast,
As to the holy heart of Rome the great triumvir
passed.

He knew the holiest heart and heights of Rome,
He drave the base wolf from the lion's lair,
And now lies dead by that empyreal dome
Which overtops Valdarno hung in air

By Brunelleschi—O Melpomene

**Breathe through thy melancholy pipe thy sweetest
threnody !**

Breathe through the tragic stops such melodies

**That Joy's self may grow jealous, and the Nine
Forget a-while their discreet emperies,**

**Mourning for him who on Rome's lordliest shrine
Lit for men's lives the light of Marathon,
And bare to sun-forgotten fields the fire of the sun !**

O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,

**Let some young Florentine each eventide
Bring coronals of that enchanted flower**

**Which the dim woods of Vallombrosa hide,
And deck the marble tomb wherein he lies
Whose soul is as some mighty orb unseen of mortal eyes.**

Some mighty orb whose cycled wanderings,

**Being tempest-driven to the farthest rim
Where Chaos meets Creation and the wings**

**Of the eternal chanting Cherubim
Are pavilioned on Nothing, passed away
Into a moonless void,—and yet, though he is dust and
clay,**

He is not dead, the immemorial Fates
Forbid it, and the closing shears refrain,
Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates !
Ye argent clarions sound a loftier strain !
For the vile thing he hated lurks within
Its sombre house, alone with God and memories of
sin.

Still what avails it that she sought her cave
That murderous mother of red harlotries ?
At Munich on the marble architrave
The Grecian boys die smiling, but the seas
Which wash Ægina fret in loneliness
Nor mirroring their beauty, so our lives grow color-
less

For lack of our ideals, if one star
Flame torch-like in the heavens the unjust
Swift daylight kills it, and no trump of war
Can wake to passionate voice the silent dust
Which was Mazzini once ! rich Niobe
For all her stony sorrows hath her sons, but Italy !

What Easter Day shall make her children rise,
Who were not Gods yet suffered ? what sure feet

Shall find their graveclothes folded ? what clear eyes
Shall see them bodily ? O it were meet
To roll the stone from off the sepulchre
And kiss the bleeding roses of their wounds, in love of
Her

Our Italy ! our mother visible !
Most blessed among nations and most sad,
For whose dear sake the young Calabrian fell
That day at Aspromonte and was glad
That in an age when God was bought and sold
One man could die for Liberty ! but we, burnt out and
cold,

See Honor smitten on the cheek and gyves
Bind the sweet feet of Mercy : Poverty
Creeps through our sunless lanes and with sharp knives
Cuts the warm throats of children stealthily,
And no word said :—O we are wretched men
Unworthy of our great inheritance ! where is the pen

Of austere Milton ? where the mighty sword
Which slew its master righteously ? the years
Have lost their ancient leader, and no word
Breaks from the voiceless tripod on our ears :

While as a ruined mother in some spasm
Bears a base child and loathes it, so our best enthusiasm

Genders unlawful children, Anarchy
Freedom's own Judas, the vile prodigal
License who steals the gold of Liberty
And yet has nothing, Ignorance the real
One Fratricide since Cain, Envy the asp
That stings itself to anguish, Avarice whose palsied
grasp

Is in its extent stiffened, monied Greed
For whose dull appetite men waste away
Amid the whirr of wheels and are the seed
Of things which slay their sower, these each day
Sees rife in England, and the gentle feet
Of Beauty tread no more the stones of each unlovely
street.

What even Cromwell spared is desecrated
By weed and worm, left to the stormy play
Of wind and beating snow, or renovated
By more destructful hands : Time's worst decay

Will wreathe its ruins with some loveliness,
But these new Vandals can but make a rainproof barrenness.

Where is that Art which bade the Angels sing
Through Lincoln's lofty choir, till the air
Seems from such marble harmonies to ring
With sweeter song than common lips can dare
To draw from actual reed ? ah ! where is now
The cunning hand which made the flowering hawthorn
branches bow

For Southwell's arch, and carved the House of One
Who loved the lilies of the field with all
Our dearest English flowers ? the same sun
Rises for us : the seasons natural
Weave the same tapestry of green and gray :
The unchanged hills are with us : but that Spirit hath
passed away.

And yet perchance it may be better so,
For Tyranny is an incestuous Queen,
Murder her brother is her bedfellow,
And the Plague chambers with her : in obscene
And bloody paths her treacherous feet are set ;
Better the empty desert and a soul inviolate !

For gentle brotherhood, the harmony
Of living in the healthful air, the swift
Clean beauty of strong limbs when men are free
And women chaste, these are the things which lift
Our souls up more than even Agnolo's
Gaunt blinded Sibyl poring o'er the scroll of human
woes,

Or Titian's little maiden on the stair
White as her own sweet lily and as tall,
Or Mona Lisa smiling through her hair,—
Ah ! somehow life is bigger after all
Than any painted Angel could we see
The God that is within us ! The old Greek serenity

Which curbs the passion of that level line
Of marble youths, who with untroubled eyes
And chastened limbs ride round Athena's shrine
And mirror her divine economies,
And balanced symmetry of what in man
Would else wage ceaseless warfare,—this at least within
the span

Between our mother's kisses and the grave
Might so inform our lives, that we could win

Such mighty empires that from her cave
Temptation would grow hoarse, and pallid Sin
Would walk ashamed of his adulteries,
And Passion creep from out the House of Lust with
startled eyes.

To make the Body and the Spirit one
With all right things, till no thing live in vain
From morn to noon, but in sweet unison
With every pulse of flesh and throb of brain
The Soul in flawless essence high enthroned,
Against all outer vain attack invincibly bastioned,

Mark with serene impartiality
The strife of things, and yet be comforted,
Knowing that by the chain causality
All separate existences are wed
Into one supreme whole, whose utterance
Is joy, or holier praise! ah! surely this were gov-
ernance

Of Life in most august omnipresence,
Through which the rational intellect would find
In passion its expression, and mere sense,
Ignoble else, lend fire to the mind,

And being joined with it in harmony
More mystical than that which binds the stars planetary,
etery,

Strike from their several tones one octave chord
Whose cadence being measureless would fly
Through all the circling spheres, then to its Lord
Return refreshed with its new empery
And more exultant power,—this indeed
Could we but reach it were to find the last, the perfect
creed.

Ah ! it was easy when the world was young
To keep one's life free and inviolate,
From our sad lips another song is rung,
By our own hands our heads are desecrate,
Wanderers in drear exile, and dispossessed
Of what should be our own, we can but feed on wild
unrest.

Somehow the grace, the bloom of things has flown,
And of all men we are most wretched who
Must live each other's lives and not our own
For very pity's sake and then undo

All that we lived for—it was otherwise
When soul and body seemed to blend in mystic
symphonies.

But we have left those gentle haunts to pass
With weary feet to the new Calvary,
Where we behold, as one who in a glass
Sees his own face, self-slain Humanity,
And in the dumb reproach of that sad gaze
Learn what an awful phantom the red hand of man
can raise.

O smitten mouth ! O forehead crowned with thorn !
O chalice of all common miseries !
Thou for our sakes that loved thee not hast borne
An agony of endless centuries,
And we were vain and ignorant nor knew
That when we stabbed thy heart it was our own real
hearts we slew.

Being ourselves the sowers and the seeds,
The night that covers and the lights that fade,
The spear that pierces and the side that bleeds,
The lips betraying and the life betrayed ;
That deep hath calm : the moon hath rest : but we
Lords of the natural world are yet our own dread
enemy.

Is this the end of all that primal force
Which, in its changes being still the same,
From eyeless Chaos cleft its upward course,
Through ravenous seas and whirling rocks and flame,
Till the suns met in heaven and began
Their cycles, and the morning stars sang, and the
Word was Man !

Nay, nay, we are but crucified, and though
The bloody sweat falls from our brows like rain,
Loosen the nails—we shall come down I know,
Staunch the red wounds—we shall be whole again,
No need have we of hyssop-laden rod,
That which is purely human, that is Godlike, that is
God.

FLOWER OF LOVE

ΤΑΥΚΥΘΗΙΚΡΟΣ · ΕΡΩΣ ·

SWEET I blame you not for mine the fault was,
had I not been made of common clay
I had climbed the higher heights unclimbed yet, seen
the fuller air, the larger day.

From the wildness of my wasted passion I had struck
a better, clearer song,
Lit some lighter light of freer freedom, battled with
some Hydra-headed wrong.

Had my lips been smitten into music by the kisses
that but made them bleed,
You had walked with Bice and the angels on that
verdant and enameled mead.

I had trod the road which Dante treading saw the suns
of seven circles shine,
Ay! perchance had seen the heavens opening, as they
opened to the Florentine.

And the mighty nations would have crowned me, who
am crownless now and without name,
And some orient dawn had found me kneeling on the
threshold of the House of Fame.

I had sat within that marble circle where the oldest
bard is as the young,
And the pipe is ever dropping honey, and the lyre's
strings are ever strung.

Keats had lifted up his hymenæal curls from out the
poppy-seeded wine,
With ambrosial mouth had kissed my forehead, clasped
the hand of noble love in mine.

And at springtide, when the apple-blossoms brush the
burnished bosom of the dove,
Two young lovers lying in an orchard would have read
the story of our love.

Would have read the legend of my passion, known the
bitter secret of my heart,
Kissed as we have kissed, but never parted as we two
are fated now to part.

For the crimson flower of our life is eaten by the
canker-worm of truth,
And no hand can gather up the fallen withered petals
of the rose of youth.

Yet I am not sorry that I loved you—ah ! what else
had I a boy to do,—
For the hungry teeth of time devour, and the silent-
footed years pursue.

Rudderless, we drift athwart a tempest, and when once
the storm of youth is past,
Without lyre, without lute or chorus, Death a silent
pilot comes at last.

And within the grave there is no pleasure, for the
blind-worm battens on the root,
And Desire shudders into ashes, and the tree of Pas-
sion bears no fruit.

Ah ! what else had I to do but love you, God's own
mother was less dear to me,
And less dear the Cytheræan rising like an argent lily
from the sea.

I have made my choice, have lived my poems, and,
though youth is gone in wasted days,
I have found the lover's crown of myrtle better than
the poet's crown of bays.

THE SPHINX

MDCCCXCIV

THE SPHINX

IN a dim corner of my room for longer than my
fancy thinks
A beautiful and silent Sphinx has watched me through
the shifting gloom.

Inviolate and immobile she does not rise she does not
stir
For silver moons are naught to her and naught to her
the suns that reel.

Red follows gray across the air the waves of moon-
light ebb and flow
But with the Dawn she does not go and in the night-
time she is there.

Dawn follows Dawn and Nights grow old and all the
while this curious cat
Lies crouching on the Chinese mat with eyes of satin
rimmed with gold.

Upon the mat she lies and leers and on the tawny-
throat of her
Flutters the soft and silky fur or ripples to her pointed
ears.

Come forth my lovely seneschal ! so somnolent, so
statuesque !
Come forth you exquisite grotesque ! half woman and
half animal !

Come forth my lovely languorous Sphinx ! and put
your head upon my knee !
And let me stroke your throat and see your body
spotted like the Lynx !

And let me touch those curving claws of yellow ivory
and grasp
The tale that like a monstrous Asp coils round your
heavy velvet paws !

A THOUSAND weary centuries are thine while I
have hardly seen
Some twenty summers cast their green for Autumn's
gaudy liveries.

But you can read the Hieroglyphs on the great sand-
stone obelisks,
And you have talked with Basilisks, and you have
looked on Hippogriffs.

O tell me, were you standing by when Isis to Osiris
knelt?
And did you watch the Egyptian melt her union for
Antony

And drink the jewel-drunken wine and bend her head
in mimic awe
To see the huge proconsul draw the salted tunny from
the brine?

And did you mark the Cyprian kiss white Adon on his
catafalque?
And did you follow Amenalk, the God of Heliopolis?

And did you talk with Thoth, and did you hear the
moon-horned Io weep?
And know the painted kings who sleep beneath the
wedge-shaped Pyramid?

LIFT up your large black satin eyes which are
like cushions where one sinks !
Fawn at my feet fantastic Sphinx ! and sing me all
your memories !

Sing to me of the Jewish maid who wandered with the
Holy Child,
And how you led them through the wild, and how
they slept beneath your shade.

Sing to me of that odorous green eve when couching
by the marge
You heard from Adrian's gilded barge the laughter of
Antinous

And lapped the stream and fed your drouth and
watched with hot and hungry stare
The ivory body of that rare young slave with his
pomegranate mouth !

Sing to me of the Labyrinth in which the twy-formed
bull was stalled !

Sing to me of the night you crawled across the tem-
ple's granite plinth

When through the purple corridors the screaming
scarlet Ibis flew

In terror, and a horrid dew dripped from the moaning
Mandragores,

And the great torpid crocodile within the tank shed
slimy tears,

And tare the jewels from his ears and staggered back
into the Nile,

And the priests cursed you with shrill psalms as in
your claws you seized their snake

And crept away with it to slake your passion by the
shuddering palms.

WHO were your lovers? who were they who
wrestled for you in the dust?
Which was the vessel of your Lust? What Leman
had you, every day?

Did giant Lizards come and crouch before you on the
reedy banks?

Did Gryphons with great metal flanks leap on you in
your trampled couch?

Did monstrous hippopotami come sidling towards you
in the mist?

Did gilt-scaled dragons writhe and twist with passion
as you passed them by?

And from the brick-built Lycian tomb what horrible
Chimæra came

With fearful heads and fearful flame to breed new
wonders from your womb?

OR had you shameful secret quests and did you
harry to your home
Some Nereid coiled in amber foam with curious rock
crystal breasts ?

Or did you treading through the froth call to the
brown Sidonian
For tidings of Leviathan, Leviathan or Behemoth ?

Or did you when the sun was set climb up the cactus-
covered slope
To meet your swarthy Ethiop whose body was of
polished jet ?

Or did you while the earthen skiffs dropped down the
gray Nilotic flats
At twilight and the flickering bats flew round the
temple's triple glyphs

Steal to the border of the bar and swim across the
silent lake
And slink into the vault and make the Pyramid your
lúpanar

Till from each black sarcophagus rose up the painted
swathèd dead ?

Or did you lure unto your bed the ivory-horned
Tragelaphos ?

Or did you love the god of flies who plagued the
Hebrews and was splashed
With wine unto the waist ? or Pasht, who had green
beryls for her eyes ?

Or that young god, the Tyrian, who was more amor-
ous than the dove
Of Ashtaroth ? or did you love the god of the
Assyrian

Whose wings, like strange transparent talc, rose high
above his hawk-faced head,
Painted with silver and with red and ribbed with rods
of Oreichalch ?

Or did huge Apis from his car leap down and lay be-
fore your feet
Big blossoms of the honey-sweet and honey-colored
nenuphar ?

HOW subtle-secret is your smile ! Did you love
none then ? Nay, I know
Great Ammon was your bedfellow ! He lay with
you beside the Nile !

The river-horses in the slime trumpeted when they
saw him come
Odorous with Syrian galbanum and smeared with
spikenard and with thyme.

He came along the river-bank like some tall galley
argent-sailed,
He strolled across the waters, mailed in beauty, and
the waters sank.

He strode across the desert sand : he reached the
valley where you lay :
He waited till the dawn of day : then touched your
black breasts with his hand.

You kissed his mouth with mouths of flame : you
made the horned god your own :
You stood behind him on his throne : you called him
by his secret name.

You whispered monstrous oracles into the caverns of
his ears :
With blood of goats and blood of steers you taught
him monstrous miracles.

White Ammon was your bedfellow ! Your chamber
was the steaming Nile !
And with your curved archaic smile you watched his
passion come and go.

WITH Syrian oils his brows were bright : and
widespread as a tent at noon
His marble limbs made pale the moon and lent the
day a larger light.

His long hair was nine cubits' span and colored like
that yellow gem
Which hidden in their garment's hem the merchants
bring from Kurdistan.

His face was as the must that lies upon a vat of new-
made wine :
The seas could not insapphirine the perfect azure of
his eyes.

His thick soft throat was white as milk and threaded
with thin veins of blue :
And curious pearls like frozen dew were broidered on
his flowing silk.

ON pearl and porphyry pedestaled he was too
bright to look upon :

For on his ivory breast there shone the wondrous
ocean-emerald,

That mystic moonlit jewel which some diver of the
Colchian caves

Had found beneath the blackening waves and carried
to the Colchian witch.

Before his gilded galiot ran naked vine-wreathed
corybants,

And lines of swaying elephants knelt down to draw
his chariot,

And lines of swarthy Nubians bare up his litter as he
rode

Down the great granite-paven road between the nod-
ding peacock-fans.

The merchants brought him steatite from Sidon in their
painted ships :

The meanest cup that touched his lips was fashioned
from a chrysolite.

The merchants brought him cedar-chests of rich apparel bound with cords :

His train was borne by Memphian lords: young kings were glad to be his guests.

Ten hundred shaven priests did bow to Ammon's altar day and night,

Ten hundred lamps did wave their light through Ammon's carven house—and now

Foul snake and speckled adder with their young ones crawl from stone to stone

For ruined is the house and prone the great rose-marble monolith !

Wild ass or trotting jackal comes and couches in the mouldering gates :

Wild satyrs call unto their mates across the fallen fluted drums.

And on the summit of the pile the blue-faced ape of Horus sits

And gibbers while the fig-tree splits the pillars of the peristyle.

THE god is scattered here and there : deep hidden
in the windy sand
I saw his giant granite hand still clenched in impotent
despair.

And many a wandering caravan of stately negroes
silken-shawled,
Crossing the desert, halts appalled before the neck
that none can span.

And many a bearded Bedouin draws back his yellow-
striped burnous
To gaze upon the Titan thews of him who was thy
paladin.

GO, seek his fragments on the moor and wash
them in the evening dew,
And from their pieces make anew thy mutilated para-
mour !

Go, seek them where they lie alone and from their
broken pieces make
Thy bruised bedfellow ! And wake mad passions in
the senseless stone !

Charm his dull ear with Syrian hymns ! he loved your
body ! oh, be kind,
Pour spikenard on his hair, and wind soft rolls of
linen round his limbs !

Wind round his head the figured coins ! stain with red
fruits those pallid lips !
Weave purple for his shrunken hips ! and purple for
his barren loins !

AWAY to Egypt ! Have no fear. Only one God
has ever died.

Only one God has let his side be wounded by a
soldier's spear.

But these, thy lovers, are not dead. Still by the
hundred-cubit gate

Dog-faced Anubis sits in state with lotus-lilies for thy
head.

Still from his chair of porphyry gaunt Memnon strains
his lidless eyes

Across the empty land, and cries each yellow morning
unto thee.

And Nilus with his broken horn lies in his black and
oozy bed

And till thy coming will not spread his waters on the
withering corn.

Your lovers are not dead, I know. They will rise up
and hear your voice

And clash their cymbals and rejoice and run to kiss
your mouth ! And so,

Set wings upon your argosies ! Set horses to your
ebon car !

Back to your Nile ! Or if you are grown sick of dead
divinities

Follow some roving lion's spoor across the copper-
colored plain, ^a 6

Reach out and hale him by the mane ⁶ and bid him be
your paramour ! ^a

Couch by his side upon the grass ^a and set your white
teeth in his throat ⁶

And when you hear his dying note ^b lash your long
flanks of polished brass ^a

And take a tiger for your mate, ^a whose amber sides are
flecked with black, ⁶

And ride upon his gilded back ⁶ in triumph through the
Theban gate, ^a

And toy with him in amorous jests, and when he turns,
and snarls, and gnaws,

O smite him with your jasper claws ! and bruise him
with your agate breasts !

WHY are you tarrying? Get hence! I weary
of your sullen ways,
I weary of your steadfast gaze, your somnolent mag-
nificence.

Your horrible and heavy breath makes the light flicker
in the lamp,
And on my brow I feel the damp and dreadful dews
of night and death.

Your eyes are like fantastic moons that shiver in some
stagnant lake,
Your tongue is like a scarlet snake that dances to fan-
tastic tunes,

Your pulse makes poisonous melodies, and your black
throat is like the hole
Left by some torch or burning coal on Saracenic
tapestries.

Away! The sulphur-colored stars are hurrying
through the Western gate!
Away! Or it may be too late to climb their silent
silver cars!

See, the dawn shivers round the gray gilt-dialed towers,
and the rain
Streams down each diamonded pane and blurs with
tears the wannish day.

What snake-tressed fury fresh from Hell, with uncouth
gestures and unclean,
Stole from the poppy-drowsy queen and led you to a
student's cell?

WHAT songless tongueless ghost of sin crept
through the curtains of the night,
And saw my taper burning bright, and knocked, and
bade you enter in.

Are there not others more accursed, whiter with lep-
rosies than I?
Are Abana and Pharphar dry that you come here to
slake your thirst?

Get hence, you loathsome mystery! Hideous animal,
get hence!
You wake in me each bestial sense, you make me what
I would not be.

You make my creed a barren sham, you wake foul
dreams of sensual life,
And Atys with his blood-stained knife were better than
the thing I am.

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you're welcome

False Sphinx ! False Sphinx ! By reedy Styx old
Charon, leaning on his oar,
Waits for my coin. Go thou before, and leave me to
my crucifix,

Whose pallid burden, sick with pain, watches the
world with wearied eyes,
And weaps for every soul that dies, and weeps for
every soul in vain.

**THE BALLAD OF READING
JAIL**

MDCCCXCVIII



IN MEMORIAM

C. T. W.

SOMETIME TROOPER OF THE ROYAL HORSE GUARDS.

OBITUARY H. M. PRISON, READING, BERKSHIRE,

JULY 7, 1896

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THE BALLAD OF READING JAIL

I

HE did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his hands
When they found him with the dead,
The poor dead woman whom he loved,
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men
In a suit of shabby gray ;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay ;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,

And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low,
“ *That fellow's got to swing.*”

Dear Christ ! the very prison walls
Suddenly seemed to reel,
And the sky above my head became
Like a casque of scorching steel ;
And, though I was a soul in pain,
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought
Quickened his step, and why
He looked upon the garish day
With such a wistful eye ;
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,

Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword !

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old ;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold :
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy ;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh :
For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame
On a day of dark disgrace,
Nor have a noose about his neck,
Nor a cloth upon his face,
Nor drop feet foremost through the floor
Into an empty space.

He does not sit with silent men
Who watch him night and day ;
Who watch him when he tries to weep,
And when he tries to pray ;
Who watch him lest himself should rob
The prison of its prey.

He does not wake at dawn to see
Dread figures throng his room,
The shivering Chaplain robed in white,
The Sheriff stern with gloom,
And the Governor all in shiny black,
With the yellow face boom.

He does not rise in piteous haste
To put on convict-clothes,
While some coarse-mouthed Doctor gloats, and
notes
Each new and nerve-twitched pose,
Fingering a watch whose little ticks
Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst
That sands one's throat, before
The hangman with his gardener's gloves
Slips through the padded door,

And binds one with three leathern thongs,
That the throat may thirst no more.

He does not bend his head to hear
The Burial Office read,
Nor, while the terror of his soul
Tells him he is not dead,
Cross his own coffin, as he moves
Into the hideous shed.

He does not stare upon the air
Through a little roof of glass :
He does not pray with lips of clay
For his agony to pass ;
Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek
That kiss of Caiaphas.

II

SIX weeks our guardsman walked the yard,
In the suit of shabby gray :
His cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay,
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every wandering cloud that trailed
Its raveled fleeces by.

He did not wring his hands, as do
Those witless men who dare
To try to rear the changeling Hope
In the cave of black Despair :
He only looked upon the sun,
And drank the morning air.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,
Nor did he peek or pine,
But he drank the air as though it held
Some healthful anodyne ;
With open mouth he drank the sun
As though it had been wine !

And I and all the souls in pain,
Who tramped the other ring,
Forgot if we ourselves had done
A great or little thing,
And watched with gaze of dull amaze
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass
With a step so light and gay,
And strange it was to see him look
So wistfully at the day,
And strange it was to think that he
Had such a debt to pay.

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the spring-time shoot :

But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And, green or dry, a man must die
Before it bears its fruit !

The loftiest place is that seat of grace
For which all worldlings try :
But who would stand in hempen band
Upon a scaffold high,
And through a murderer's collar take
His last look at the sky ?

It is sweet to dance to violins
When Love and Life are fair :
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is delicate and rare :
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air !

So with curious eyes and sick surmise
We watched him day by day,
And wondered if each one of us
Would end the self-same way,
For none can tell to what red Hell
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead men walked no more
Amongst the Trial Men
And I knew that he was standing up
In the black dock's dreadful pen,
And that never would I see his face
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm
We had crossed each other's way :
But we made no sign, we said no word,
We had no word to say ;
For we did not meet in the holy night,
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,
Two outcast men we were :
The world had thrust us from its heart,
And God from out his care :
And the iron gin that waits for Sin
Had caught us in its snare.

III

IN Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,
And the dripping wall is high,
So it was there he took the air
Beneath the leaden sky,
And by each side a Warder walked,
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched
His anguish night and day ;
Who watched him when he rose to weep,
And when he crouched to pray ;
Who watched him lest himself should rob
Their scaffold of its prey.

The Governor was strong upon
The Regulations Act :
The Doctor said that Death was but
A scientific fact :
And twice a day the Chaplain called,
And left a little tract.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,
And drank his quart of beer :
His soul was resolute, and held
No hiding-place for fear ;
He often said that he was glad
The hangman's hands were near.

But why he said so strange a thing
No Warder dared to ask :
For he to whom a watcher's doom
Is given as his task,
Must set a lock upon his lips,
And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try
To comfort or console :
And what should Human Pity do
Pent up in Murderers' Hole ?
What word of grace in such a place
Could help a brother's soul ?

With slouch and swing around the ring
We trod the Fools' Parade !
We did not care : we knew we were
The Devil's Own Brigade :

And shaven head and feet of lead
Make a merry masquerade.

We tore the tarry rope to shreds
With blunt and bleeding nails ;
We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,
And cleaned the shining rails :
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,
And clattered with the pails.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,
We turned the dusty drill :
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,
And sweated on the mill :
But in the heart of every man
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day
Crawled like a weed-clogged wave :
And we forgot the bitter lot
That waits for fool and knave,
Till once, as we tramped in from work,
We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole
Gaped for a living thing ;

The very mud cried out for blood
To the thirsty asphalte ring :
And we knew that ere one dawn grew
Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent
On Death and Dread and Doom :
The hangman, with his little bag,
Went shuffling through the gloom :
And each man trembled as he crept
Into his numbered tomb.

That night the empty corridors
Were full of forms of Fear,
And up and down the iron town
Stole feet we could not hear,
And through the bars that hide the stars
White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams
In a pleasant meadow-land,
The watchers watched him as he slept,
And could not understand
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep
Who never yet have wept :
So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave —
That endless vigil kept,
And through each brain on hands of pain
Another's terror crept.

Alas ! it is a fearful thing
To feel another's guilt !
For, right within, the sword of Sin
Pierced to its poisoned hilt,
And as molten lead were the tears we shed
For the blood we had not spilt.

The Warders with their shoes of felt
Crept by each padlocked door,
And peeped and saw, with eyes of awe,
Gray figures on the floor,
And wondered why men knelt to pray
Who never prayed before.

All through the night we knelt and prayed,
Mad mourners of a corse !
The troubled plumes of midnight were
The plumes upon a hearse :

And bitter wine upon a sponge
Was the savor of Remorse.

The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,
But never came the day ;
And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,
In the corners where we lay :
And each evil sprite that walks by night
Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast,
Like travelers through a mist :
They mocked the moon in a rigadoon
Of delicate turn and twist,
And with formal pace and loathsome grace
The phantoms kept their tryst.

With mop and mow, we saw them go,
Slim shadows hand and hand :
About, about, in ghostly rout
They trod a saraband :
And the damned grotesques made arabesques,
Like the wind upon the sand !

With the pirouettes of marionettes,
They tripped on pointed tread :

But with flutes of Fear they filled the ear,
As their grisly masque they led,
And loud they sang, and long they sang,
For they sang to wake the dead.

“ Oho ! ” they cried, “ *The world is wide,
But fettered limbs go lame !
And once, or twice, to throw the dice
Is a gentlemanly game,
But he does not win who plays with Sin
In the secret House of Shame.* ”

No things of air these antics were,
That frolicked with such glee :
To men whose lives were held in gyves,
And whose feet might not go free,
Ah ! wounds of Christ ! they were living things,
Most terrible to see.

Around, around, they waltzed and wound ;
Some wheeled in smirking pairs ;
With the mincing step of a demirep
Some sidled up the stairs :
And with subtle sneer, and fawning leer,
Each helped us at our prayers.

The morning wind began to moan,
But still the night went on :
Through its giant loom the web of gloom
Crept till each thread was spun :
And, as we prayed, we grew afraid
Of the Justice of the Sun.

The moaning wind went wandering round
The weeping prison-wall :
Till like a wheel of turning steel
We felt the minutes crawl :
O moaning wind ! what had we done
To have such a seneschal ?

At last I saw the shadowed bars,
Like a lattice wrought in lead,
Move right across the whitewashed wall
That faced my three-plank bed,
And I knew that somewhere in the world
God's dreadful dawn was red.

At six o'clock we cleaned our cells,
At seven all was still,
But the sough and swing of a mighty wing
The prison seemed to fill,

For the Lord of Death with icy breath,
Had entered in to kill.

He did not pass in purple pomp,
Nor ride a moon-white steed.
Three yards of cord and a sliding board
Are all the gallows' need :
So with rope of shame the Herald came
To do the secret deed.

We were as men who through a fen
Of filthy darkness grope :
We did not dare to breathe a prayer,
Or to give our anguish scope :
Something was dead in each of us,
And what was dead was Hope.

For Man's grim Justice goes its way,
And will not swerve aside :
It slays the weak, it slays the strong,
It has a deadly stride :
With iron heel it slays the strong,
The monstrous parricide !

We waited for the stroke of eight :
Each tongue was thick with thirst :
For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate
That makes a man accursed,
And Fate will use a running noose
For the best man and the worst.

We had no other thing to do,
Save to wait for the sign to come :
So, like things of stone in a valley lone,
Quiet we sat and dumb :
But each man's heart beat thick and quick,
Like a madman on a drum !

With sudden shock the prison-clock
Smote on the shivering air,
And from all the jail rose up a wail
Of impotent despair,
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things
In the crystal of a dream,
We saw the greasy hempen rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,

And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so
That he gave that bitter cry,
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,
None knew so well as I :
For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

IV

THERE is no chapel on the day
On which they hang a man :
The Chaplain's heart is far too sick,
Or his face is far too wan,
Or there is that written in his eyes
Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,
And then they rang the bell,
And the Warders with their jingling keys
Opened each listening cell,
And down the iron stair we tramped,
Each from his separate Hell.

Out into God's sweet air we went,
But not in wonted way,
For this man's face was white with fear,
And that man's face was gray,
And I never saw sad men who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
We prisoners called the sky,
And at every careless cloud that passed
In happy freedom by.

But there were those amongst us all
Who walked with downcast head,
And knew that, had each got his due,
They should have died instead :
He had but killed a thing that lived,
Whilst they had killed the dead.

For he who sins a second time
Wakes a dead soul to pain,
And draws it from its spotted shroud,
And makes it bleed again,
And makes it bleed great gouts of blood,
And makes it bleed in vain !

Like ape or clown, in monstrous garb
With crooked arrows starred,
Silently we went round and round
The slippery asphalte yard ;

Silently we went round and round,
And no man spoke a word.

Silently we went round and round,
And through each hollow mind
The Memory of dreadful things
Rushed like a dreadful wind,
And Horror stalked before each man,
And Terror crept behind.

The Warders strutted up and down,
And kept their herd of brutes,
Their uniforms were spick and span,
And they wore their Sunday suits,
But we knew the work they had been at,
By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,
There was no grave at all :
Only a stretch of mud and sand
By the hideous prison-wall,
And a little heap of burning lime,
That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,
Such as few men can claim :

Deep down below a prison-yard,
Naked for greater shame,
He lies, with fetters on each foot,
Wrapt in a sheet of flame !

And all the while the burning lime
Eats flesh and bone away,
It eats the brittle bone by night,
And the soft flesh by day,
It eats the flesh and bone by turns,
But it eats the heart away.

For three long years they will not sow
Or root or seedling there :
For three long years the unblest spot
Will sterile be and bare,
And look upon the wondering sky
With unrepentful stare.

They think a murderer's heart would taint
Each simple seed they sow.
It is not true ! God's kindly earth
Is kindlier than men know,
And the red rose would but blow more red,
The white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose !
Out of his heart a white !
For who can say by what strange way,
Christ brings his will to light,
Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore
Bloomed in the great Pope's sight ?

But neither milk-white rose nor red
May bloom in prison air ;
The shard, the pebble, and the flint,
Are what they give us there :
For flowers have been known to heal
A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white,
Petal by petal, fall
On that stretch of mud and sand that lies
By the hideous prison-wall,
To tell the men who tramp the yard
That God's Son died for all.

Yet though the hideous prison-wall
Still hems him round and round,

And a spirit may not walk by night
That is with fetters bound,
And a spirit may but weep that lies
In such unholy ground,

He is at peace—this wretched man —
At peace, or will be soon :
There is no thing to make him mad,
Nor does Terror walk at noon,
For the lampless Earth in which he lies
Has neither Sun nor Moon.

They hanged him as a beast is hanged :
They did not even toll
A requiem that might have brought
Rest to his startled soul,
But hurriedly they took him out,
And hid him in a hole.

They stripped him of his canvas clothes,
And gave him to the flies :
They mocked the swollen purple throat,
And the ~~stark~~ and staring eyes :
And with laughter loud they heaped the shroud
In which their convict lies.

The Chaplain would not kneel to pray
By his dishonored grave :
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross
That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well ; he has but passed
To Life's appointed bourne :
And alien tears will fill for him
Pity's long-broken urn,
¶ For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn. •

V

I KNOW not whether Laws be right,
Or whether Laws be wrong ;
All that we know who lie in jail
Is that the wall is strong ;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law
That men have made for Man,
Since first Man took his brother's life,
And the sad world began,
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff
With a most evil fan.

This too I know—and wise it were
If each could know the same —
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should see
How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,
And blind the goodly sun :
And they do well to hide their Hell,
For in it things are done
That Son of God nor son of Man
Ever should look upon !

The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air :
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there :
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child
Till it weeps both night and day :
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,
And gibe the old and gray,
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,
And none a word may say.

Each narrow cell in which we dwell
Is a foul and dark latrine,
And the fetid breath of living Death
Chokes up each grated screen,

And all, but Lust, is turned to dust
In Humanity's machine.

The brackish water that we drink
Creeps with a loathsome slime,
And the bitter bread they weigh in scales
Is full of chalk and lime,
And Sleep will not lie down, but walks
Wild-eyed, and cries to Time.

But though lean Hunger and green Thirst
Like asp with adder fight,
We have little care of prison fare,
For what chills and kills outright
Is that every stone one lifts by day
Becomes one's heart by night.

With midnight always in one's heart,
And twilight in one's cell,
We turn the crank, or tear the rope,
Each in his separate Hell,
And the silence is more awful far
Than the sound of a brazen bell.

And never a human voice comes near
To speak a gentle word :

And the eye that watches through the door
Is pitiless and hard :
And by all forgot, we rot and rot,
With soul and body marred.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain
Degraded and alone :
And some men curse, and some men weep,
And some men make no moan :
But God's eternal Laws are kind
And break the heart of stone.

And every human heart that breaks,
In prison-cell or yard,
Is as that broken box that gave
Its treasure to the Lord,
And filled the unclean leper's house
With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah ! happy they whose hearts can break
And peace of pardon win !
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from Sin ?
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in ?

And he of the swollen purple throat,
And the stark and staring eyes,
Waits for the holy hands that took
The Thief to Paradise ;
And a broken and a contrite heart
The Lord will not despise.

The man in red who reads the Law
Gave him three weeks of life,
Three little weeks in which to heal
His soul of his soul's strife,
And cleanse from every blot of blood
The hand that held the knife.

And with tears of blood he cleansed the hand,
The hand that held the steel :
For only blood can wipe out blood,
And only tears can heal :
And the crimson stain that was of Cain
Became Christ's snow-white seal.

VI

IN Reading jail by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Eaten by teeth of flame,
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,
And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,
In silence let him lie :
No need to waste the foolish tear,
Or heave the windy sigh :
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword !

C. 3. 3.

UNCOLLECTED POEMS

LE JARDIN DES TUILERIES

THIS winter air is keen and cold,
And keen and cold this winter sun,
But round my chair the children run
Like little things of dancing gold.

Sometimes about the painted kiosk
The mimic soldiers strut and stride,
Sometimes the blue-eyed brigands hide
In the bleak tangles of the bosk.

And sometimes, while the old nurse cons
Her book, they steal across the square,
And launch their paper navies where
Huge Triton writhes in greenish bronze.

And now in mimic flight they flee,
And now they rush, a boisterous band —
And, tiny hand on tiny hand,
Climb up the black and leafless tree.

Ah ! cruel tree ! if I were you,
And children climbed me, for their sake
Though it be winter I would break
Into spring blossoms white and blue !

WITH A COPY OF "A HOUSE OF
POMEGRANATES "

GO, little book,
To him who, on a lute with horns of pearl,
Sang of the white feet of the Golden Girl :
And bid him look
Into thy pages : it may hap that he
May find that golden maidens dance through thee.

THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE

· · · · ἀναγκαίως δ' ἔχει
βίον θερίζειν ὥστε κάρπιμον στάχυν,
καὶ τὸν μὲν εἶναι τὸν δὲ μὴ.

THOU knowest all—I seek in vain
What lands to till or sow with seed —
The land is black with briar and weed,
Nor cares for falling tears or rain.

Thou knowest all—I sit and wait
With blinded eyes and hands that fail,
Till the last lifting of the veil,
And the first opening of the gate.

Thou knowest all—I cannot see.
I trust I shall not live in vain,
I know that we shall meet again,
In some divine eternity.

ON THE RECENT SALE BY AUCTION OF
KEATS' LOVE LETTERS

THESE are the letters which Endymion wrote
 To one he loved in secret and apart,
 And now the brawlers of the auction-mart
Bargain and bid for each poor blotted note,
Aye ! for each separate pulse of passion quote
 The merchant's price ! I think they love not art
 Who break the crystal of a poet's heart,
That small and sickly eyes may glare or gloat.

Is it not said, that many years ago,
 In a far Eastern town some soldiers ran
 With torches through the midnight, and began
To wrangle for mean raiment, and to throw
 Dice for the garments of a wretched man,
Not knowing the God's wonder, or his woe ?

THE NEW REMORSE

THE sin was mine ; I did not understand.
So now is music prisoned in her cave,
Save where some ebbing desultory wave
Frets with its restless whirls this meagre strand.
And in the withered hollow of this land
Hath Summer dug herself so deep a grave,
That hardly can the leaden willow crave
One silver blossom from keen Winter's hand.
But who is this who cometh by the shore ?
(Nay, love, look up and wonder !) Who is this
Who cometh in dyed garments from the South ?
It is thy new-found Lord, and he shall kiss
The yet unravished roses of thy mouth,
And I shall weep and worship as before.

THE HARLOT'S HOUSE

WE caught the tread of dancing feet,
We loitered down the moonlit street,
And stopped beneath the Harlot's house.

Inside, above the din and fray,
We heard the loud musicians play
The "Treues Liebes Herz," of Strauss.

Like strange mechanical grotesques,
Making fantastic arabesques,
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin
To sound of horn and violin,
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

Like wire-pulled automatons,
Slim silhouetted skeletons
Went sidling through the slow quadrille,

Then took each other by the hand,
And danced a stately saraband ;
Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.

Sometimes a clock-work puppet pressed
A phantom lover to her breast,
Sometimes they seemed to try and sing,

Sometimes a horrible Marionette
Came out, and smoked its cigarette
Upon the steps like a live thing.

Then turning to my love I said,
"The dead are dancing with the dead,
The dust is whirling with the dust."

But she, she heard the violin,
And left my side, and entered in :
Love passed into the house of Lust.

Then suddenly the tune went false,
The dancers wearied of the waltz,
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl,

And down the long and silent street,
The dawn with silver-sandaled feet,
Crept like a frightened girl.

UNDER THE BALCONY

O BEAUTIFUL star with the crimson mouth !
O moon with the brows of gold !
Rise up, rise up, from the odorous south !
And light for my love her way,
Lest her little feet should stray
On the windy hill and the wold !
O beautiful star with the crimson mouth !
O moon with the brows of gold !

O ship that shakes on the desolate sea !
O ship with the wet, white sail !
Put in, put in, to the port to me !
For my love and I would go
To the land where the daffodils blow
In the heart of a violet dale !
O ship that shakes on the desolate sea !
O ship with the wet, white sail !

O rapturous bird with the low, sweet note !
O bird that sits on the spray !
Sing on, sing on, from your soft brown throat !

And my love in her little bed
Will listen, and lift her head
From the pillow, and come my way !
O rapturous bird with the low, sweet note !
O bird that sits on the spray !

O blossom that hangs in the tremulous air !
O blossom with lips of snow !
Come down, come down, for my love to wear !
You will die on her head in a crown,
You will die in a fold of her gown,
To her little light heart you will go !
O blossom that hangs in the tremulous air !
O blossom with lips of snow !

WASTED DAYS

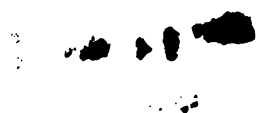
(FROM A PICTURE PAINTED BY MISS V. T.)

A FAIR slim boy not made for this world's pain,
With hair of gold thick clustering round his
ears,

And longing eyes half veiled by foolish tears
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain :
Pale cheeks whereon no kiss hath left its stain,
Red under lip drawn in for fear of Love,
And white throat whiter than the breast of dove.
Alas ! alas ! if all should be in vain.

Behind, wide fields, and reapers all a-row
In heat and labor toiling wearily,
To no sweet sound of laughter or of lute.

The sun is shooting wide its crimson glow,
Still the boy dreams : nor knows that night is nigh,
And in the night-time no man gathers fruit.





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The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the cultural context of the research. It highlights the need for researchers to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of the communities they are studying. This is particularly important in the field of education, where cultural differences can significantly impact learning outcomes.

The second part of the paper focuses on the methodology used in the study. It describes the process of selecting participants, collecting data, and analyzing the results. The authors emphasize the importance of using a mixed-methods approach to capture both quantitative and qualitative data.

The third part of the paper presents the findings of the study. It discusses the results of the quantitative analysis, which showed a significant positive correlation between cultural awareness and academic achievement. The authors also present the results of the qualitative analysis, which revealed that students from diverse backgrounds often face unique challenges in the classroom.

The final part of the paper discusses the implications of the findings for future research and practice. The authors suggest that educators should strive to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. They also recommend that future research should continue to explore the relationship between culture and education.